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## Narodowa Demokracja's Political Marketing in the 16 June 1929 Elections to Territorial Self-government Institutions in Lublin

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**NARODOWA DEMOKRACJA'S POLITICAL  
MARKETING IN THE 16 JUNE 1929 ELECTIONS  
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INSTITUTIONS IN LUBLIN**

Political marketing involves applying a set of procedures to create an image of a candidate (group of candidates) in order to have it promoted and to attract his/her (their) supporters (Cwalina 2005: 23–25). Generally, political marketing is identified with activities aimed at attracting an electorate, which is tantamount to indicating the importance of the marketing activities during electoral campaigns. Although obviously narrowing down the meaning of the concept concerned, this is indispensable from the vantage point of the present essay whose aim is to present methods and techniques to attract supporters and gain votes by Narodowa Demokracja (ND – National Democracy) during elections to territorial self-government institutions in Lublin in 1929. The notion of Narodowa Demokracja incorporates an extended political formation including a political party Stronnictwo Narodowe (SN), supra-party organisms such as Obóz Wielkiej Polski (Great Poland Camp) and Młodzież Wszechpolska (All-Polish Youth) as well as multiple social, economic, cultural and educational associations.

Lublin was an important centre to concentrate and coordinate SN's activities in the voivodship territory. The city of Lublin was home to SN's Rada Okręgowa (District Council) for the Lublin voivodship, which was chaired by Adam Majewski. In light of quantitative data collected by the Lublin Voivod's administrative apparatus, in mid-1929 the Lublin SN counted more than 300 members and a few thousand supporters (APL: Miesięczne sprawozdanie sytuacyjne wojewody lubelskiego nr 27, Lublin, 6 VIII 1929 r., k. 5; Jachymek 1975: 137). It owned „Głos Lubelski”, a daily that was skillfully edited, being popular and influential. It performed information and persuasion functions. The

opinion-making nature of the daily exceeded the boundaries of its political formation since it was read even by those who did not share its national political programme. The daily presented ND's stance pertaining municipal and regional issues. Its editorial team, headed by Stefan Borowski, succeeded in coining and circulating among the public of many phrases and political slogans that crisply presented Lublin's political situation.

The aim of the following essay is to present partially an example of techniques used to win political supporters in the local conditions without any knowledge of professional marketing principles but by deploying practical experiences gained in the course of political action. The selected case involves ND's Lublin structures in 1929 and reveals a process to develop modern forms of political marketing as animated by the political groupings. Many principles of good packaging for a political product and effective political advertising were then intuitively applied during on-going political struggles, which took advantage of a fairly effective method of idealization of one's own image and discrediting that of one's enemy.

On 28 February in 1929, after less than two years of its operation, Rada Miejska (Municipal Council) in Lublin was dissolved. Seweryn Czerwiński, the head of Zarząd Miejski (City's Board), popularly called a people's commissar, took over power in the city (Marczuk 1994: 51–58). The date of elections for a new Rada Miejska in Lublin was set for 16 June 1929. The city was thought to be „red” for a socialist-independence political stream had been present in it since the dawn of Poland's independence. Until then the results of the elections to Rada Miejska m. Lublin had evidenced a significant support of the voters for Polska Partia Socjalistyczna (PPS – Polish Socialist Party) whose local leaders partook in the formation of the municipal authorities. Candidates from the *sanacja* list were equally dangerous competitors. The ND's leadership had to elaborate a political strategy for the period of the electoral struggle. They had to differentiate the means of political action according to spatial, social, religious and cultural divisions of the Lublin inhabitants, where beautiful, taken care of inner city streets inhabited by well-to-do residents co-existed with districts of poverty inhabited by the Polish and Jewish poor.

Skilfull building of an image of ND as a formation of people feeling responsibility for the social and economic condition of the city constituted an important marketing activity. The national democrats belonged to Lublin's social, professional and high life elite (Maj 2002: 68–80).

They were active in SN, OWP and MW as well as in the economic or cultural-educational associations. The changed arrangement of forces following the May coup d'état did not affect negatively their level of activity. They were involved in many actions of public nature. They initiated and developed operations of many institutions and organisations, social and political. In mid-1920s, the Lublin structures of ND had considerable influences, which was expressed, inter alia, by their potential to man jobs. According to an opinion by an observer of the situation in Lublin „the ND milieu demonstrated then a prominent activity and strove for a monopolist power. The city of Lublin got then American loans to build slaughterhouses, powerhouses and sewage systems. [...] Obviously, such serious investments demanded that many employees be involved – from an engineer and a technician to an ordinary worker. These situations were ruthlessly taken advantage of. Many people were bought for the price of the jobs” (Bielski 1963: 220).

The national democrats took care to create in the public discourse an image of their formation as aiming at depoliticization of territorial self-government structures. For this reason the ND electoral organisms bore names that on surface read apolitical, most often stressing economic issues and referring to religious beliefs of their voters. The Lublin's ND milieu called into existence a Narodowy Chrześcijański Komitet Gospodarczy (NChKG – National Christian Economic Committee). Its inaugural meeting took place on 4 May in 1929. It was headed by Komitet Wykonawczy (Executive Committee) with its chairman Adam Majewski. The Komitet's membership included Bolesław Dziemski, Paweł Dziubiński, Maria Fryczowa, Jan Leonowicz, Tomasz Pleskaczyński, Tadeusz Rakowski, Edward Rettinger. In accordance with the principle to include all social classes, which was clearly highlighted in the marketing activities, NChKG included representatives of diverse vocations. There were medical doctors (Dziemski, Majewski), merchants (Leonowicz, Rakowski) as well as a barrister (Rettinger), a Catholic priest (Dziubiński), a teacher (Fryczowa), a craftsman (Pleskaczyński). The all-class character of the formation was complemented by the composition of candidates on the NChKG's electoral list that included 38 names. In terms of the social-professional structure, the presence of well educated persons was prominent: an engineer, a priest, a medical practitioner, a teacher, a lawyer, an administrative clerk. Apart from the representatives of the intelligentsia, a considerable number of candidates cultivating commercial and artisan trades drew attention. That group included persons who

defined themselves as a „merchant” or „an owner of a pharmacy store” as well as people practising artisan-service trades, such as a blacksmith, a taylor, a baker, a construction worker, a butcher. One of the candidates listed „the worker” as his occupation. Three candidates revealed that their livelihood was based on their municipal property ownership. They were mainly owners of tenant houses as well as owners of small service and production workshops, such as Jan Nadarkiewicz who was an owner of a workshop known as „Handel Win i Towarów Kolonialnych” (Trade in wines and colonial goods) in Lublin.

The personal composition of NChKG generated trust since it included persons known in Lublin for their social-professional status. The name of Majewski, a medical doctor and a social activist, an art sponsor and a district head of OWP Dzielnicy Lubelsko-Wołyńskiej was a sufficient basis to trust the Komitet. Majewski enjoyed the position of a respected Lublin resident, who occupied important public positions in the city and the voivodship. Also Ludwik Christians, a lawyer employed as a bank officer was liked and popular in the economic and political circles. He was popular with young national democrats. He studied at the Lublin University in 1923–1927, chairing the Lublin division of Młodzież Wszechpolska and being the head of Dzielnic Lubelsko-Wołyńska Ruchu Młodych OWP. Jan Juściński, a senior member of the blacksmith trade in Lublin, was in turn a councillor at Izba Rzemieślnicza in Lublin, while Jan Nadarkiewicz chaired Chrześcijańskie Stowarzyszenie Właścicieli Nieruchomości; Bronisław Jakimiński, a medical practitioner and Tomasz Pleskaczyński, an artisan were its two deputy chairmen. Such a selection of people enjoying high social trust, who performed important public functions and had prestigious occupations, evidenced significant skills to identify the voters’ preferences. A signal was thus emitted towards them that the NChKG’s list included names of candidates representing various social milieus and enjoying trust as well as being experienced in the public service who had acted for the benefit of society for many years. The average age of the ND candidates for Rada Miejska was 33 years. The oldest of them were Majewski (61 lat) and Pleskaczyński (54 lat), whereas the youngest: Christians (27 lat), Dziubiński (30 lat), Fryczowa (34 lata) and Leonowicz (36 lat).

The segmentation of the electoral market allowed for addressing part of the activities at women. The NChKG list included the names of three women. Fryczowa, a long time chairwoman of the Lublin NOK organization was listed close to the top of the list. During the electoral

campaign, this Lublin division's activities intensified, which counted then almost 300 female members. They were active in the field of extra curricular education, founded day-care centres (*światlice*), libraries and reading rooms. They organised vocational training courses for girls, inclusive of popular courses in tailoring and sewing. Their lectures on the status of family, permanency of marriage, children's and youth's upbringing were interweaved with remarks featuring ND and its national political programme as a guarantee of the Catholic moral norms to be observed in the public and private life in Poland. The ND's merits were contrasted with effects of the political *sanacja* camp's initiatives. The female electorate was asked this question: „That *sanacja*, which has professed itself for three years to be the supervisor of the living conditions in Poland, what it has done in Lublin for You, for the whole population?” (*Kobiety...* 1929: 3).

The editorial team of „Głos Lubelski” remained a centre of propaganda-canvassing activities. During the electoral campaign, the pages of the daily were used to feature publicity and journalist tricks to increase the readers' interest. Their attention was attracted by titles of the press articles that included sensational and fun elements such as „merry Lublin budgets” (*wesołe budżety lubelskie*). One particular ruse was to use a joint title for several press articles edited in columns. Each performed an information-canvassing function. Each had also a cognitive value. In the current political messages current events of historical rank were being instrumentally taken advantage of. This is exemplified by the preparations for the celebrations of the tenth anniversary of the peace treaty as well as Ferdinand Foch's death. The Versailles Treaty's anniversary gave rise to recollecting Roman Dmowski's merits. The press articles propagated statements concerning (1) political skills of ND's founder and leader; (2) his right choice of allies from among the Entente states during the war of 1914–1918; (3) his ability to anticipate domestic and international developments. Dmowski's characteristics were contrasted with those of Józef Piłsudski, spreading an opinion that highlighted ND's leader's eminent political merits. The search for a political authority that would oppose Piłsudski directed the national democrats' attention towards politicians of the world rank. The remembrance of Foch, who died in 1929, provided an opportunity to discredit Piłsudski. In their light, the French and Polish Marshal was a politician in whom best characteristics of the nation's leader were merged. His recollections featured notions of dignity, military honour, probity and personal modesty as well as his fervent support for Catholicism. In the

ND's political message, Foch constituted a role model of a politician and a military man who loved Poland and Poles, which is why „the Polish nation will not forget these merits of his Marshal, which he had laid down for Poland's sake saving it when endangered by the onslaught of the red enemy by sending one of his closest military commanders, General Weygand, by which he proved how much he appreciated the Polish nation, its freedom and political independence” (Zgon... 1929: 3). In the above mentioned text the title of Poland's Marshal was used to divert attention away from Piłsudski; the name of Maxime Weygand was deployed to indirectly remind that in the national democrats' opinion he had been the single author of the plan of the Battle of Warsaw in 1920.

The NChKG's electoral programme referred mainly to an evaluation of consequences of the so far practised „socialist-bundist” economy of Lublin's self-government. The condition of the financial catastrophe was diagnosed. Attention was also drawn to multiple phenomena that made it difficult to improve the economic-fiscal situation of the city. Warnings were expressed against consequences of an increase in public administration expenditures since „the socialist-bundist city's board placed in administrative positions in the Magistrate all of its well-served politicians and the party's big mouths” (Nic... 1929: 3). There were remarks concerning the way public money was spent, participatory, fiscal oppression and the operation of a „clique in stead of self-government” (Co... 1929: 3). The criticism was also extended over commissar Czerwiński's activities who was accused of not having a plan to make savings in the municipal expenditures, of ignorance as far as the Lublin reality, of forsaking consultations with all political forces in the city, of lacking precise criteria to evaluate employees at the municipal institutions. It was stressed that in the area of nationality policy the city's conservatorship authorities (*zarząd komisaryczny*) implemented the *sanacja* camp's policy that involved privileging non-Polish population, especially Jewish. It was remarked that such actions had led to a changed mode of conduct on part of the Jews, especially the Jewish councillors as „formerly the Jews in the Municipal Council were quiet and peaceful whereas last year they felt privileged and they tried to use those privileges that had been granted to them by their alliance with PPS to the disadvantage of the Polish population” (Narodowy... 1929: 3). This is why *Odezwa do Polaków*, issued by NChKG, included a statement that the ND's electoral committee „is a sincere voice of the whole city's Polish Christian population's inter-

ests". The nationalist, anti-left and anti-*sanacja* character of its initiatives was stressed.

The NChKG's authorities in Lublin received assistance from Zarząd Główny SN (SN's Main Board) in Warsaw. By Majewski's motion a decision was taken to homogenise the operations of Sekcja Propagandowo-Prasowa (Propaganda-Press Section) and Sekcja Samorządowa (Self-government Section) affiliated at the ZG SN for the period of elections as well as coordinating their initiatives with the operations of SN in Lublin. Canvassing was carried out in an oral and written form, open party meetings were prepared, mass meetings, lectures, speeches concerning the current situation in the country, the region and the city. Well-known personages from SN's central authorities were invited, meetings were held with members of the local party ranks. The ND pre-electoral meetings took place in various parts of the city. The intensity of the pre-electoral activities was evidenced by the number of the meetings: on just a single day – 19 May of 1929 – at Lublin's Drożdżownia Pleskaczyński had a meeting with several tens of voters, Rettinger participated in a meeting with Cukrownia „Lublin”'s employees, whereas at the same time other NChKG candidates called up meetings in the city's peripheral districts: at Rury Jezuickie and in front of the parish building at Kalinowszczyzna. The meetings were attended by representatives of SN, NOK, Katolicki Związek Kobiet, Stowarzyszenie Serca Jezusowego, Stowarzyszenie Świętej Trójcy. Trusted delegates and SN instructors were involved in the meetings' organisation, which gathered 80–100 people on average.

ND's political isolation in Lublin was the reason why initially plans to make tactical electoral alliances had been given up. This situation allowed for claiming that „we did not ask anyone for any alliances” (St. B. 1929: 4). NChKG's leadership initiated talks with Lublin's Chrześcijańska Demokracja's (ChD – Christian Democracy) members. During the talks SN was represented by Majewski, Dziubiński and Rettinger, while the CHD's side was represented by Stanisław Bryła and Stefan Smólski. The talks took place on 15 May in 1929 but bore no fruit for their initiators. According to Majewski's report no agreement with ChD was reached because Bryła and Smólski decided to engage in „the break-up work” (*robotę rozbijacką*). That meant that a situation from the previous year was repeated when Lublin's ND undertook failed attempts to make an electoral coalition and to compile a joint list of candidates for seats in the Parliament. Frustration caused by lacking electoral co-operation resulted in the growth of critical remarks con-



cerning the conduct of the centre councillors who were being accused that over the 1927–1929 period they had made tactical alliances with socialist and Jewish councillors. The activities of the Lublin ChD's members were seen as symptoms of political opportunism.

On 16 June in 1929, there were 59 968 individuals who enjoyed the right to vote in the municipal self-governmental elections in Lublin, out of whom 42 009 participated in the elections. 19 721 votes were cast in favour of the Polish lists, 15 067 – in favour of the Jewish ones. SN's candidates won 8993 votes and 13 mandates, BB's candidates 6682 votes and 10 mandates, respectively, while PPS got 3326 votes and 4 mandates (APL: Wybory do Rady Miejskiej m. Lublina, k. 134). In comparison to parliamentary elections of 1928, the share of votes for ND increased by more than 3 thousand. The following candidates from the NChKG list became city councillors: Christians, Dziubiński, Fryczowa, Juściński, Leonowicz, Majewski, Nadarkiewicz, Pleskaczyński, Rettinger and Michał Chodorowski, Wieńczysław Ignaszewski, Paweł Janiszewski, Stanisław Kalinowski.

The pre-electoral efforts generated a success that produced an interest of SN's leadership in the scale of the country. The Lublin victory was taken advantage of in the propaganda actions all over Poland. However, in Lublin the results of the self-governmental elections translated into a state of expectation for the next moves by the political enemies. The self-government's operations were paralysed as evidenced by attempts to determine the composition of the Rada Miejska's executive. The Lublin's ND organisation was not able to consume the victory won. The aforementioned political isolation made it difficult to find an ally, whereas the *sanacja* camp used this opportunity to reintroduce the conservatorship authorities in the city. Nonetheless, the Lublin experience contributed to increased ND's marketing skillfulness in the next electoral campaigns. The ND ranks in Lublin understood the gist of an efficient usage of the marketing techniques. Lublin's national democrats demonstrated their familiarity with a general nature of political action. They formulated political objectives, defined the political market, created ideological-political resources indispensable to attract supporters, took advantage of their technical background constituted by the newspaper editorship, the political party's and associations' premisses. At times, they were overly optimistic as far as the „natural” nature of their nationalist political programme, from which they erroneously deduced that „each Pole votes for the national list”, and if s/he did not, then s/he was not a Pole.

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